

Preventing Facial Skin Irritation when wearing Surgical/FRSM masks

Surgical and Fluid Resistant Type IIR Surgical Masks

Prolonged use of surgical face masks (>6 hours) can have an effect on skin integrity and the skin barrier due to friction and rubbing of the mask along with a build up of moisture.

Prevention Information

- Avoid use of make up when wearing face masks
- Use a light moisturiser in the morning, at break times and after work.
- Stay hydrated.
- Wear sunscreen/lip balm when exposed to the sun to protect skin.
- Have break times from wearing face masks at regular intervals e.g. task rotation.
- Use a thicker moisturiser like Vaseline behind your ears when using ear loop masks.
- Try working less consecutive shifts if possible.

Managing Symptoms and Irritation to Skin

Typically two different types of symptoms might affect you,

1) Either skin irritation with redness, dryness, itching in the area the mask covers the face and under the eyes, and/or

2) Spots or papules around your mouth and sometimes cheeks

- Wash your face with Dermol 500 or QV wash before and after each shift.
- Use Epaderm or Hydromol as a barrier cream to areas where the masks is most likely to touch the skin e.g. edges of the mask.
- You can also try Cavilon™ Barrier Cream sparingly once day, before you start your shift and a moisturiser after work.

If the reactions continue despite these steps:

- Take a photograph of the skin irritation to your face.
- Contact Occupational health on 0141 201 0594 to speak to a member of the nursing team for further advice.
- Inform your line manager.
- Complete a Datix Report.